

E. Human Services

A range of programs and services exist to address the variety of needs of citizens in the Greater Dundalk area. However, three issues need further study or action. First, a formal needs assessment survey should be conducted to determine if the level of services is adequate. Second, improvements should be made regarding how information about the existing services is communicated. Third, accessibility to some services is a concern.

Services are clustered in a few key locations in the GDA. One is the Eastern Family Resource Center near Franklin Square Hospital, which is located several miles from the GDA. Substance abuse treatment and literacy programs are available but not in locations within the actual GDA community. The former Merritt Point Elementary School on Dunmanway contains the Department of Social Services office, the Police Athletic League Recreation Center, mental health services, and the Community Assistance Network. The North Point Government Center, containing the Police station and the offices of the 7th district county council representative and Congressional offices, as well as the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program, some Recreation and Parks activities, and the vocational programs of The Alliance. The Fleming Center, soon to be expanded and rebuilt, serves Turner's Station. It houses a senior center, a Head Start program, Recreation and Parks programs, and the Reading Literacy Center. The Dundalk Health Center, which also houses Key Point mental health services, is located at 7700 Dunmanway in Dundalk Village. The Ateaze Senior Center is a central resource, as is the North Point Library. There is a need to increase awareness of Ateaze and Edgemere Senior Centers and the Fleming Community Center as focal points for services of the Department of Aging, as well as for the programs they provide within each location.

As part of the data-gathering phase of the work of the Human Services Committee, the representative from the Department of Social Services spearheaded development of a community survey that was administered broadly in the GDA. This survey was distributed in some churches, at selected service locations in the area, and was printed in the Dundalk Eagle. The questionnaire is not considered scientific, nor are the people who responded a representative sample of residents. Nonetheless, 341 people responded, thus giving the committee some helpful information. The results were tabulated by the Police Department.

Respondents came primarily from five neighborhoods: Old Dundalk, Turner's Station, Edgemere, Logan Village, and Eastfield. About two-thirds had lived in their neighborhoods more than ten years. Approximately 57% were homeowners and 31% were renters; the other 12% did not respond to that question.

The most positive things about living in the neighborhoods were:

- friendly people 12.6%
- family lives nearby 10.5%
- activities for youth 10.0%
- feel safe 8.8%
- close to place of worship 8.6%
- close to stores 7.9%
- close to schools 7.8%

The most important problems mentioned by respondents were:

- visible drug activity 11.2%
- poor or no public transportation 8.9%
- teenagers loitering 6.6%
- messy neighbors 6.0%
- people who don't leash/curb dogs 5.7%
- inadequate parking 5.4%
- traffic 5.4%

The answers to what activities or programs would be most important to include in the plan reflect some of the major issues raised in this plan:

- parent-child activities 12.2%
- after-school programs 11.9%
- adult job skills center 11.6%
- substance abuse treatment 10.7%

According to participants, 12-15 year-olds, 16-18 year-olds, and young adults were the age groups most in need of programs. Respondents were asked what the benefits of these programs would be to them or their families. Having safe places to go, teaching people self-respect and self-esteem, increasing parents' involvement with their children, and teaching people how to get along with each other were listed as benefits to respondents and/or their families. When asked if there were other places to obtain these services, 42% said "no" and about a third said they did not know. The major reasons for not using these services were "people might not know about the service" (26.0%), costs/money (21.5%), and transportation (18.6%).

Respondents were asked where they would turn in a personal or family crisis. The top answers given by this particular group of respondents were church/priest at 26.9%, Social Services and not sure at 11.5%, and family at 8.7%. The police and friends each registered 4.8%. When asked where they learned about services, 17.9% said from church, 12.5% from family, and 8.9% from the Dundalk Eagle.

In answer to the question about what people did not want to see in the plan, three issues were significant. These were "Section 8" subsidized housing, an "abuse and detention center," and "big industry."

A very positive result of the survey was that almost 30% of respondents were willing to volunteer, primarily in the areas of education, public safety, the environment, housing, and human services. This willingness to work on these issues verifies some of the major priorities identified in this plan.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The services people in the GDA require are generally available within the area. These services, however, are not always well publicized. In addition, without further study, it is not possible to determine if the level of services or their accessibility is adequate. In looking at the array of needs and services, one motto that shaped the committee's recommendations was "Centralize Information; Decentralize Services."

Improve the accessibility of information about human services.

Formalize the Human Services Roundtable for Greater Dundalk.

Such a forum would be an opportunity to increase awareness of services available. It would also serve as a mechanism to encourage social service cooperation and partnerships. Issues such as coordinated transportation services and a large-scale needs assessment could be designed and coordinated through such a group. The existing Human Services Committee could be restructured and expanded to serve this function.

Develop an ongoing program by which citizens will know which services are available.

The Committee recommends exploring the possibility of creating and promoting one central telephone number for all human services needs in the area, not only for services for those with limited incomes but also various licenses and services that any citizen might require. Several telephone numbers could be used, one for each area of the county. One possible place to "locate" the numbers could be the Baltimore County Library. The committee recommends that the Greater Dundalk area be used for a pilot project to test the idea. If successful, it could be replicated in other areas of the county.

Especially critical is creating a "user-friendly," step-by-step way of accessing support and assistance for substance abusers and their families. This issue could be addressed first as a test of how service providers work together and communicate information to the public.

Develop a "Healthy Choices" speakers' bureau.

The Community Health Assessment Project, which has been collecting data and making recommendations for a large area of southeast Baltimore City and eastern Baltimore County, has created a series of goals for improving health. These include reducing smoking, managing stress, and improving nutrition. Action teams have been established to pursue these objectives. The Human Services Committee supports this comprehensive effort to improve the health of citizens in the GDA.

The majority of health issues are related to lifestyle choices. The Human Services Committee proposes the establishment of a speakers' bureau that would be available to schools, churches, and community groups. Speakers would encourage wise and healthy life choices.

One area of particular concern is teen-age pregnancy. A program to address teen health issues, including sexuality, should be placed in PAL and other youth centers.

Improve the delivery of human services.

Continue to decentralize county services.

While residents can access most services within the community, applying for subsidized housing requires a trip to Towson. Those in need should be able to apply in their communities.

Locating county services in local communities can provide consumers for local businesses. Locating human service facilities strategically should be considered as part of the study of all government buildings that is recommended in the Physical Development section of this plan.

The committee recommends exploring using government buildings such as senior centers as central places for obtaining information about available services in the area, especially in Edgemere, where no central service location is currently available.

Develop a program that would more easily transport people to needed services.

Many organizations have vans or buses that are not in use at all times. Concerns are liability and payment for drivers.

The Human Services Committee recommends that creative options be explored. A committee should be established to investigate the most appropriate strategies. Options include:

- vehicle dealers who lend vans and donate maintenance,
- existing taxi companies, and
- fee-for-service van services, with fees on a sliding scale and/or vouchers.

This recommendation ties in with the suggestion made by the Economic Development Committee to promote waterfront destinations. Boaters could be connected with land services through the same van service. If enough users existed, a van service might be cost-effective.

Develop programs for youth in self-care after school hours ("latch-key" programs).

This issue also relates to discussions that took place in the Education and the Public Safety Committees. Youth initiatives are a major emphasis of this plan. As mentioned elsewhere in this plan, due to lack of supervision, the hours between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. provide a window of opportunity for juveniles to commit crime and engage in sexual activity.

Currently, the PAL centers offer afternoon and evening programs. At least one school principal is using discretionary funds to develop a latchkey program. Other service organizations, churches, and groups like school PTAs could also sponsor these programs. For example, Baltimore County Department of Aging and a daycare provider could combine efforts to offer after-school care at the Ateaze and Edgemere Senior Center

Once an appropriate site is located in the area, create a cold-weather shelter for the homeless.

The existing cold weather shelter that serves the east side of the county is located at the Eastern Family Resource Center. According to the Department of Social Services, space in this facility is inadequate to meet current needs. The existing center should be expanded or another site identified. Shelters should be located where they are accessible to the homeless but do not cause disruption to residential areas. One site suggested for consideration is the Government Center at Wise Avenue and Merritt Boulevard. Space appears to exist for an overnight facility to locate there, accessible to main roads but removed from residential areas. Other locations should be investigated as part of the study of all government buildings proposed by the Physical Development Committee.

Encourage volunteerism among community residents.

Encourage the formation of new community associations and empower communities to undertake actions discussed in the plan.

The county should encourage the creation or strengthening of community associations for each community in the study area. Involving citizens is the most effective strategy to conserve our neighborhoods. The county should offer additional training to improve the effectiveness of and participation in these groups and to address neighborhood issues. It should also encourage beautification projects and their ongoing maintenance by volunteer groups such as Greening of Dundalk, "Adopt a Road," and "Adopt a Park."

Urge churches to become more involved in their communities.

As shown in the results of the survey summarized earlier, many people turn to religious institutions in times of need. In addition, churches use weekly bulletins and other forms of communication to notify parishioners about upcoming events and issues of interest and concern. Membership in the Dundalk Area Ministerial Alliance should be expanded, and this organization should be used as a vehicle to inform religious leaders and church goers about programs and opportunities for involvement in community activities. Neighborhood associations and other nonprofit groups would welcome caring, dedicated volunteers.

Encourage employers to provide flexibility so that employees can volunteer in their communities.

Community associations and nonprofit groups depend on volunteers. Besides county government support, residents should be offered flexibility in their work schedules to participate in activities to strengthen their neighborhoods.

F. Physical Development: Land Use, Zoning, And Infrastructure

Land Use and Zoning

In 1993, the land use breakdown for the GDA was as follows:

1993 Land Use	Acres	Percent
Industrial	5443	32.5
Residential	4737	28.3
Park/Recreation	2934	17.5
Institutions	1391	8.3
Undeveloped	970	5.8
Mixed Commercial	781	4.7
Regional Commercial	204	1.2
Agriculture/Open Space/Forest	162	1.0
Pipeline Non-Residential	120	0.7

("Pipeline" means approved but not yet built)

The definitions and approximate acreage of each use by Regional Planning District (RPD), as described in the "Demographic Profile" section of the plan, is detailed in Appendix G. Note that the predominant land use in RPD 329 is single family detached housing, as opposed to industrial in RPDs 330 and 331. Bethlehem Steel dominates RPD 331, while much of the undeveloped land in both RPDs 330 and 331 is zoned industrial. Zoning in the GDA allows for residential, commercial, and industrial development.

Residential Land

About a quarter of the land in Dundalk is used for housing. Much of the housing consists of older town homes, but some areas have developed as single home communities. Almost two-thirds of the houses in Old Dundalk Village and St. Helena (Census Tracts 4209 and 4210) were built prior to 1939. The major apartment complexes are Town and Country in the Charlesmont area, Hidden Cove in Inverness, and Yorkway near Old Dundalk.

Industrial Land

Industrial uses account for about a third of the land area in Dundalk. Bethlehem Steel owns a large number of acres in the southern part of the study area, and the Back River Sewage Treatment Plant is located on the northern end of the GDA. The Port of Baltimore is adjacent to Dundalk, and Ft. Holabird Industrial Park, which is located mostly in Baltimore City, is on the western edge. Historically, manufacturing has provided tremendous employment opportunities. The number of manufacturing jobs has declined significantly in recent decades.

Commercial Land

Eastpoint Mall is located at the northern edge of the GDA. Commercial development is still located along Dundalk Avenue; but most of the new investment and reinvestment has occurred along Merritt Boulevard, which has become the commercial spine of the area. Equally important is the Old Dundalk Village revitalization area. While a relatively small shopping center, it has

important symbolic value as the historic core of the community. Logan Village Shopping Center is located at the southern end of the GDA; and North Point Plaza, where a new Wal Mart will soon be built, is located on North Point Boulevard. Income levels in Dundalk have not risen as the population ages, and the overall number of residents continues to decrease. These trends raise the question of the viability of the current occupancy of the retail space.

Institutional Land

A slightly larger percentage of acreage is devoted to institutional uses than to industrial uses. Major institutions include BCCC: Dundalk and the cemeteries along German Hill Road.

Undeveloped Land

Almost 1,000 acres is undeveloped in Dundalk. Two large pieces of land provide opportunity for redevelopment. These areas include industrial land owned by Bethlehem Steel and the former Seagram's plant. County economic development officials have targeted the Bethlehem Steel site for redevelopment that would provide high-paying industrial jobs. The Seagram's plant is zoned M-L, light manufacturing. The future use of this acreage is an important concern to residents and businesses in Dundalk.

Recreation and Parks Land

1. Current Acreage and Goals

The Baltimore County parkland acreage goal, as mandated by the State Office of Planning and Department of Natural Resources, is 30 acres per 1,000 citizens. Parklands acreage is credited on an acre-for-acre basis, while natural and/or open space areas are only counted at a rate of 1/3 (e.g., a 30-acre open space would count as only 10 acres toward the goal). State and/or federal parklands are not counted toward the acreage goal, although the land areas of the three major city-owned reservoirs may be counted as open space areas.

The Recreation and Parks Councils listed below serve the GDA. The estimated population for each of these Council Areas, based on 1990 census information, is as follows:

R&P Council	1990 Population
Colgate-Eastpoint	3,695
Berkshire-Eastwood	7,408
Patapsco Neck-Norwood	8,340
Dundalk-Eastfield	12,260
Turner Station	4,564
Watersedge	1,421
West Inverness	8,988
Bear Creek	3,879
Gray Charles	6,723
North Point Village	5,420
Edgemere-Sparrows Point	9,976
Total:	62,698

Based on 1997 population estimates and the acreage needs analysis method currently utilized by the Department of Recreation and Parks, the area parkland deficit is approximately 660 acres. Appendix H summarizes the existing parkland and open space within the plan area, which are creditable based on State of Maryland standards.

While the acreage deficit based on state standards and counting only the sites within the study area is technically 660, several factors should be considered when weighing the area's parkland needs. First, there are a number of large countywide and regional parks, as well as large-scale county-serving open spaces (such as the reservoirs), which provide a recreational value to the southeast area without actually being located within the GDA. Such nearby countywide and regional parks as Rocky Point Park and Fort Howard Park provide a certain level of recreational opportunity to the citizens of the study area. Additionally, though the county does not receive acreage credit for state parklands, the nearby North Point State Park (a.k.a., Black Marsh) provides significant passive recreational opportunity to the area. Similarly, BCCC: Dundalk, which is located within the study area, includes significant open space and recreational facilities that benefit the area. The presence and effect of these sites should be considered when evaluating the study area's actual parkland needs.

2. Recreational Facility Analysis

The following outlines the current supply of traditional active recreational facilities (ball diamonds, athletic fields, tennis and multi-purpose courts) within the area. The number of facilities required to meet the population's recreational needs, as well as the overall current facility deficit, are likewise listed.

Rec. Facility	Current Supply	Current Need	Deficit
Ball diamonds	99	58	0
Athletic Fields	51	30	0
Tennis Courts	42	30	0
Multi-Purpose Courts	35	18	0

Summary:

Meeting strict state guidelines for parkland is difficult in the study area due to population density and the associated high level of development. Available lands for acquisition as parklands are quite scarce, particularly large open parcels suitable for development as active neighborhood or community parks.

Conversely, this area contains adequate active recreational facilities such as ball diamonds, athletic fields, and tennis and multi-use courts. Based on facilities-demand standards, the area actually has an excess of active recreational facilities. The reason for this excess is two-fold: first, the population in the area has dropped; and second, the area contains a relatively large number of school/recreation centers, with numerous facilities of these types.

Infrastructure

A number of capital projects are planned for the GDA in the coming years and have been included in the county's Capital Budget. Appendix J lists the planned projects for the area.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

As with many community conservation areas throughout the county, the GDA has historically suffered from a lack of public investment in infrastructure. Funds have been allocated in recent years for alley reconstruction, paving, and curb and gutter replacements. The alley petition process was made easier and increased funding was allocated to fortify Dundalk's older neighborhoods. Recommendations of this committee focus on maintaining the Dundalk Village considered by many to be one of the most attractive town centers in Baltimore County. Funding for regular maintenance of streets, curbs and gutters, and sidewalks; a plan to lessen truck traffic through communities; and an inventory of vacant buildings in the community for potential use by community groups or new businesses should be continued. The committee also supports the adoption of objective guidelines for determining priorities for road resurfacing and alley reconstruction by the Department of Public Works. Currently, there are schedules in place for the general maintenance of older infrastructure.

Make maintenance of infrastructure a priority.

Adopt objective guidelines for determining infrastructure maintenance priorities.

Many older communities throughout Dundalk have felt a "disinvestment" of government resources over the years. Many of these communities were built during the same period of time; therefore, much of the infrastructure needed repair simultaneously, making a regular maintenance schedule difficult. Because the needs are great throughout the community, objective guidelines for prioritization should be implemented in partnership with communities and engineers from the Department of Public Works (DPW). DPW should also continue to coordinate projects such as rehabilitating water lines, resurfacing streets, and replacing curb and gutter, lessening the impact on neighborhoods and saving money.

Continue funding for regular maintenance.

Due to the tremendous need for infrastructure improvements in many Dundalk neighborhoods, the maintenance budget should be continued in order to keep up with necessary repairs before major systems fail. The county government should continue its policy of budgeting for annual maintenance when streetscape projects are undertaken.

Evaluate truck traffic along major roads.

Baltimore County government, in cooperation with the Eastern Baltimore Area Chamber of Commerce, should study the truck traffic issue and make recommendations to Baltimore City and the State of Maryland concerning those roads under their jurisdiction. Plans to handle Dundalk Marine Terminal truck traffic should also be developed.

Explore the best uses for current building facilities, and promote infill development on vacant or underused properties.

Inventory all vacant buildings for potential use by community organizations or new businesses.

The county should conduct an assessment of all vacant land and buildings. Infill development--building on sites that were left over from earlier projects--should be encouraged for appropriate sites. Vacant buildings detract from a community's image. An inventory of all vacant property should be undertaken to determine possible uses by new businesses or community-based organizations. Redevelopment incentives should be established to encourage the redevelopment or razing of problem buildings. Design standards for new development and rehabilitation of existing buildings should be developed by the Office of Planning to ensure compatibility with the surrounding community.

Inventory all government buildings to determine if they are used to their fullest potential, and encourage retaining or locating government services in the GDA.

Baltimore County and the state and federal governments maintain and operate buildings in the GDA. As the Human Services Roundtable seeks ways to make services accessible and promote job creation and economic development, government buildings fully to serve the citizens in the area. An inventory of current uses and excess capacity would help future planning.

The post office and the district court have been important uses in the Village. All efforts should be made to retain some sort of retail presence in the current post office building. When the post office relocated in Catonsville, back office services such as bulk mailing were relocated to a larger site, and the retail sales function remained in the core of the revitalization area.

Maintain and update older recreation facilities.

Many recreation councils share facilities with the neighborhood schools. While this concept allows for easy accessibility, the facilities, such as the gyms in elementary schools, are often too small to accommodate older children. Vacant or underused buildings should be assessed for possible uses.

Creating multi-purpose buildings similar to the Fleming Center should be considered as a way for agencies to share the cost of these facilities while offering a variety of services in easily accessible locations. Accessibility remains a major issue at many county-owned facilities.

Examine more closely possible uses for the Seagram's property.

This rapidly declining, long-vacant distillery poses a potential threat to the stable residential communities surrounding it. The property contains the buildings once used by the distillery and is zoned for industrial use. However, it is located in the middle of a residential area with limited access. The current owner is considering elderly housing of some sort on the site.

One option that has been suggested is public acquisition of this property to transform the land into a park in this densely populated area.

Retain properties with historical significance.

Historic properties provide much of the architectural character of Dundalk. One of the main attractions to current and former residents and current employees in the area is the historic Dundalk Village, a national historic district. Historic buildings shape the character of the area. A thorough inventory of all properties with historic significance should be done and a strategy developed to preserve these structures.

Evaluate zoning designations in the GDA.

Establish a task force to study the zoning of all land in the GDA and make recommendations during the county's Comprehensive Zoning Map Process (CZMP), scheduled to begin in August 1999.

Citizens should work with the Office of Planning and the county councilman to review existing zoning maps and make recommendations and/or "raise" issues that may be included in the next CZMP. Because of the current high zoning densities for residential neighborhoods throughout Dundalk, consideration should be given to lowering residential housing densities on appropriate parcels to encourage single-family, detached housing.

G. Public Safety

Dundalk is served by three county fire facilities and two volunteer fire companies as well as police personnel from Precinct 12. The Police Precinct's offices are located within the North Point Government Center building located at 1747 Merritt Boulevard. A total of 88 officers manning 15 patrol cars on three shifts serve the GDA. Additionally, each shift has a shift lieutenant, three sergeants, and three corporals. The police patrol 24.7 square miles of territory by car. Precinct 12 also has a Police Community Outreach Unit, which consists of six officers. The Outreach officers are available to work with the community groups on community-specific issues.

The Police Department has also implemented a new Community Action Team (CAT) which consists of 49 officers. These personnel are divided into seven squads of six officers, each headed by a sergeant. The officers of CAT are deployed to trouble spots throughout the county upon request.

Precinct 12 also has a detective division comprised of the Community Drug and Violence Interdiction Team and Investigative Services Unit. The precinct's detective division consists of 10 detectives.

Crime cannot be viewed in isolation. Studies show that crime is linked with delinquency and neighborhood deterioration. Crime is often associated with an inability of individuals to gain acceptance and status in conventional society. Crime rates are often higher in economically

depressed areas and, according to a report by the county's Strategic Management Group that was convened in 1994, crime is often associated with the following factors:

- unemployment
- low education levels
- low income
- illegitimate births
- single-parent households
- unrelated individuals from broken homes
- drug use and abuse
- violence
- a rise in residential mobility and a shift from homeowners to renters
- minority group populations
- children unsupervised before and after school

The four types of crime that the police regard as indicators of community problems are:

1. violent crimes (homicides, rapes, robberies, and aggravated assaults),
2. drug-related crimes,
3. juvenile arrests, and
4. maintenance of order calls.

Areas where the incidents of crimes are often high include: shopping malls; apartment complexes or high density residential areas; neighborhoods where a small number of juveniles commit a large number of crimes; and locations near the Beltway, other interstate highways, or other major corridors.

The overall crime rate in Precinct 12 was the second highest of all the precincts in the county during 1994, 1995, and 1996. During the 1996 reporting period, Precinct 12 offenses in the violent crime category remained the same as in 1995. Total property crime declined by 6%, Part I serious offenses declined by 5%, and the Part II lesser offenses rose by 11.9%, which caused a total crime increase of 2.9%. Destruction of Property was the most frequent Part II crime reported from 1994 to 1996 at 17.7%, and Domestic Incident was second at 12.9% in 1996. During the first nine months of 1996, Eastpoint Mall had the highest number of assaults, the third highest number of shoplifting incidents, the fifth highest rate of thefts from autos, and the seventh highest rate of auto thefts of the 10 major malls in the county.

As might be expected based on the information presented, incidents of crime were generally higher in areas of the GDA previously identified with other social problems.

As with most communities throughout Baltimore County, public safety is a major concern with in the Greater Dundalk community. Recommendations made by the Public Safety Committee call for continued funding for police, recreational activities for youth, effective substance abuse prevention and treatment programs, ridding neighborhoods of nuisance properties, and getting

citizens, businesses and churches involved in public safety. These efforts should help to reduce crime and the fear of crime in the Greater Dundalk neighborhoods.

Much of the Public Safety Committee's discussion focused on juvenile crime, a significant and troubling problem to the Greater Dundalk community. During the first nine months of 1997, juvenile arrests accounted for 23.7% of total arrests in the county. For the same time period, an examination of property crime statistics indicated that slightly more than one in three arrests were of juveniles. Arrests of juveniles for violent crime were slightly less than one in three, or 31.7%, countywide. The majority of juvenile crime occurs in the "after-school" hours of 2:00 to 10:00 p.m., as shown in the following graph.

During the past few years, Baltimore County has developed two major initiatives to deal with juvenile crime: the Police Athletic League (PAL) Program which focuses on crime prevention and the JOINS (Juvenile Offenders in Need of Supervision) Program which focuses on reducing the rate of recidivism among first-time offenders. Presently, there are seven PAL Centers in Baltimore County and two pilot areas for the JOINS program in the Woodlawn and Wilkens Precincts. The Dundalk PAL Center serves over 60 children a day at its Merritt Point Center location and has been very successful in providing alternative activities for youth after school and during the summer months. Early results of the JOINS program indicate that by involving parents, police, and school personnel in aggressive, early intervention with youth who have committed their first offense, juveniles are much less likely to become repeat offenders. To date, only three out of 100 children enrolled in the program have committed another offense. The evaluation of the JOINS pilot program will, in part, determine its implementation countywide.

In response to the high density of senior residency, provide the opportunity for the Department of Aging to offer the services that support seniors in maintaining independence and quality of life. Importantly, address their concerns about crime, about becoming victims, and counteract their vulnerability through patrols, education, etc. Assist seniors in remaining independent and in their own homes in order to allow for the stabilization of the community.

In 1996, as part of the Local Law Enforcement Block Grant funding through the Bureau of Justice, communities throughout the county, and specifically in the West Inverness community, worked cooperatively with rental property managers, recreation councils, police, businesses, Citizens on Patrol, and other public and private agencies to reduce crime in the community. This effort in West Inverness reduced crime for drug-related arrests by 81%, maintenance of order calls by 29%, and violent crime by 33%.

Federally funded crime bill initiatives also included the COPS (Community-Oriented Policing) program, designed to increase community policing activities, concentrating on drug enforcement, services for youth, and crime-prevention activities. COPS officers have also been deployed in Community Action Teams (CAT). The CAT concept is a swift and sure response to specific neighborhood crime problems and continues to be successful and welcomed by communities. CAT has had a positive impact on crime and community well being, particularly in the Colgate, Turner Station, West Inverness, Dundalk Avenue, Eastwood, St. Helena, and North Point Village neighborhoods of Dundalk.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Increase efforts for crime prevention and law enforcement.

Advocate for continued funding for the Baltimore County Police Department.

Programs that focus on involving police in the fabric of a neighborhood, such as the CAT Team and the Local Law Enforcement Block Grants are currently being conducted in West Inverness, should be considered for support by county or other funds when the initial federal funds are no longer available. These programs have proved to be effective because they involve all segments of the community and allow police officers to engage the community in problem-solving and prevention activities. Staffing levels and equipment such as vehicles should also be evaluated regularly to provide resources to problem neighborhoods. Asset-seizure money should be allocated to those neighborhoods with the highest levels of drug activity, thereby putting the greatest amount of resources in the most impacted areas of the community.

Provide recreational activities for youth to combat the juvenile crime problem.

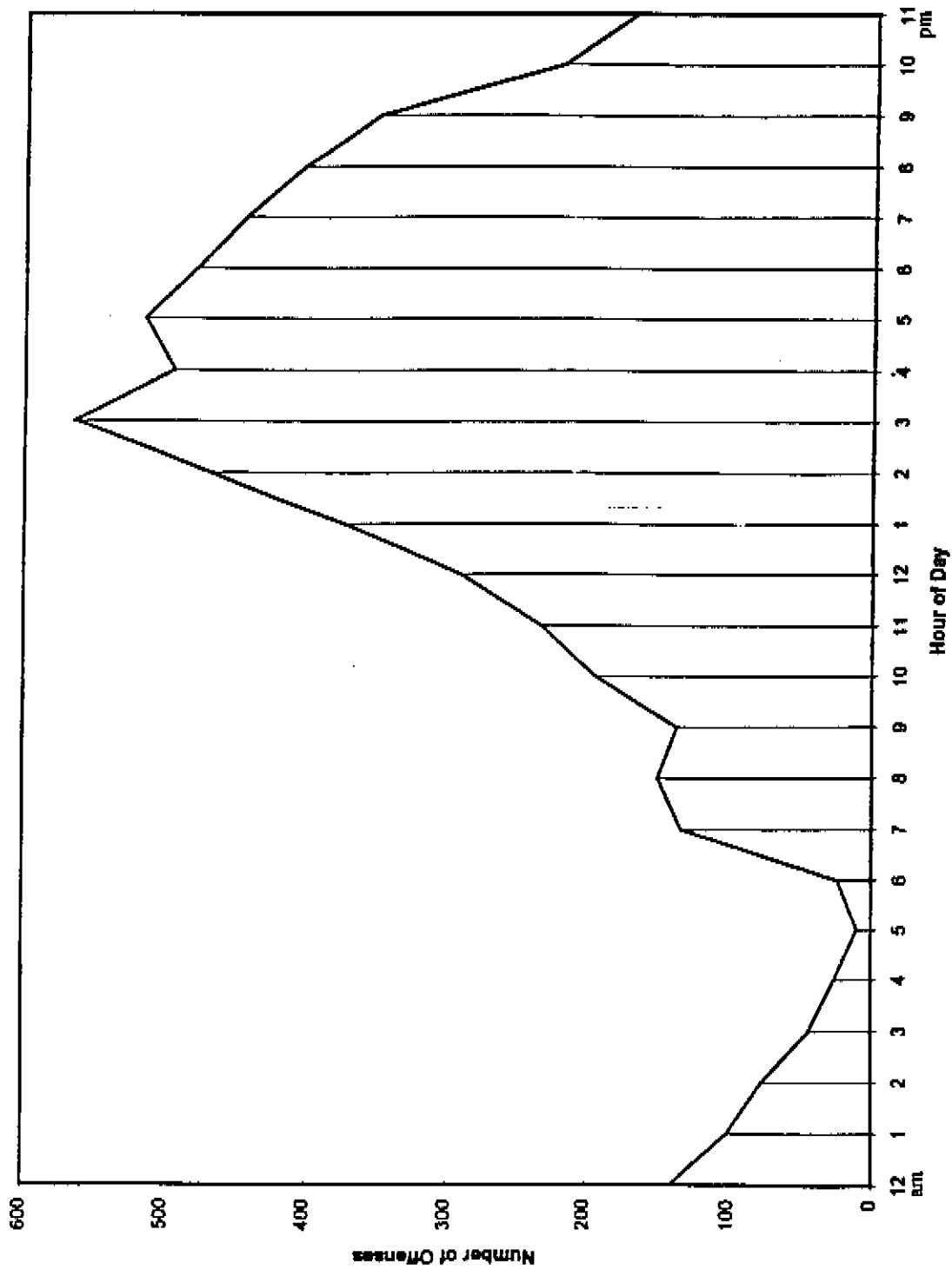
The majority of juvenile crime occurs in the "after-school" hours of 2:00 to 6:00 p.m. when children are unsupervised by parents or school. Programs during those crucial hours should be supported by a collaborative effort of county agencies, non-profit service providers, churches, schools, and civic associations. The Education and Human Services Committees also recommended similar programs. These programs need to be community-based, eliminating transportation issues, and should be offered at a low or no cost. Programs should be structured and include some type of substance abuse prevention programming. Staff training is also necessary to ensure quality programs.

Form a "youth council" to promote youth leadership and a citizen advisory council to develop a strategy to prevent juvenile crime and delinquency.

A youth council, which would address a broad range of issues of concern to young people and promote youth leadership, should be composed of youth representatives from all the high schools, middle schools, and service organizations such as the YMCA and the Boy Scouts. The ratio of young people to adults should be at least three to one.

The citizen advisory council should be comprised of representation from all sectors of the community, including young people. The council should work with the youth council to identify gaps in services and evaluate the youth programs of other areas for applicability to the Greater Dundalk community. The council should also review the juvenile criminal justice systems and, if appropriate, work with legislators to effect changes in the system. This council could act as a sub-committee of the Precinct 12 Police Community Relations Council or the Greater Dundalk Community Council.

Juvenile Crime by Time of Day
07/01/96 through 06/30/97



Source: Baltimore County Police Department

Establish a citizens group to monitor the judicial process.

Offenders are often released with suspended sentences or probation without supervision. Many residents feel judges should be held accountable for releasing repeat offenders. A panel of citizen volunteers should be established to review the criminal justice system and recommend changes to make that system more accountable to the citizens it serves.

Establish programs to encourage public involvement in crime prevention.

Citizen groups have had success in deterring crime in their neighborhoods. Programs such as Citizens on Patrol and Neighborhood Watch should be maintained and supported through funding from the police department and other crime prevention agencies. These groups should engage citizens in the process through outreach and educational programs. Other innovative programs should be evaluated with the goal of implementing additional programs in this community.

Address drug and alcohol abuse in the community.

Establish accessible affordable drug and alcohol rehabilitation centers.

Many families in this country have felt the devastation caused by alcohol and drug abuse. Treatment centers are necessary but need to be affordable to those with the desire but not the means to begin recovery. Because accessibility is also an issue, citizens should be educated about the centers' patients and security to increase their support for community-based rehabilitation centers and halfway houses.

Expand substance abuse awareness programs in elementary schools.

The DARE program reaches children in middle school, many of whom have already had some form of contact with drugs and/or alcohol. SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) programs that have begun in several elementary schools to educate younger children about the dangers of drugs should expand to more schools. Programs should focus on teaching students to make good decisions and building self-confidence.